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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

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ROBERT S. RANGEL, STAFF DIRECTOR

VOTE TO ELIMINATE INJUSTICE FOR OUR DISABLED VETERANS

SUPPORT H.R. 4546, THE DOD AUTHORIZATION BILL

Dear Colleague:

After a number of years of concerted effort, H.R. 4546, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003 will authorize the concurrent receipt of military retired pay and compensation for service-connected disabilities paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Military retirees are entitled to receive both the retired pay for which they contributed years of faithful service and the VA compensation for a service connected disability intended to recognize a lifelong limitation on earning potential.

H.R. 4546 fulfills the promise of the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget—Fiscal Year 2003 (H. Con. Res. 353) adopted in the House and creates a program with \$5.8 billion over five years in mandatory spending to fund full concurrent receipt during fiscal year 2007 for disabled retirees rated by the VA as 60 percent disabled and above.

The transition program would provide the following amounts to disabled retirees during fiscal year 2003:

- (1) Members rated 100 percent disabled would receive \$750 per month.
- (2) Members rated 90 percent disabled would receive \$500 per month.
- (3) Members rated 80 percent disabled would receive \$250 per month.
- (4) Members rated 70 percent disabled would receive \$250 per month.
- (5) Members rated 60 percent disabled would receive \$125 per month.

The transition program during fiscal years 2004, 2005, and 2006 would reduce for each retiree the difference between the amount of retired pay received the previous year and full concurrent receipt by 23 percent, 30 percent, and 64 percent, respectively. During fiscal year 2007, all retirees with disability rating of 60 percent and above would receive their entire retired pay and VA disability compensation.

This initiative represents the culmination of a multi-year bi-partisan effort to restore justice in veterans compensation. We urge you to vote "YES" on H.R. 4546.

Sincerely,


John
Chafee
Mil





Vic Snyder
Ranking Democrat
Military Personnel Subcommittee